



**NORTH DAKOTA**  
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **North Dakota Department of Health Urges Everyone To Get a Flu Shot This Season**

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Health is reminding all North Dakotans of the importance of receiving a flu shot, according to state health officer Terry Dwelle, M.D.

“Each year, more than 400 North Dakotans die as a result of complications from influenza and pneumonia, and hundreds more are hospitalized,” said Dwelle. “The flu can be a serious disease and getting a flu shot is the easiest and most effective way to protect yourself and your loved ones from the flu. There is plenty of flu vaccine this year, so we are urging everyone to get a flu shot to avoid influenza, regardless of age or health status.”

Dwelle spoke at a news conference in Fargo today to emphasize the importance of getting a flu shot and to remind people that the flu is not just a cold or a 24-hour bug. Dwelle was joined by Dr. Jeanne Santoli, deputy director of the Immunization Services Division in the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Santoli’s visit comes during National Influenza Vaccination Week (NIVW), a week aimed at raising awareness about the seriousness of influenza and the importance of influenza vaccination for groups of people at high risk for complications from the flu, their close contacts, and all those who want to be protected against influenza. Dr. Santoli stressed, “since the flu season usually peaks in January or later, getting vaccinated in November, December, and beyond still provides protection against influenza.”

In North Dakota, the influenza season usually does not peak until after the New Year, so there is still sufficient time for people to be vaccinated. Getting a flu shot now will offer protection from the flu throughout the influenza season.

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The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that everyone who wants to reduce the risk of influenza infection be vaccinated against the flu, especially the following people at high-risk for complications:

- All children ages 6 months up to their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday
- All adults age 50 and older
- Residents of long-term care facilities
- People of any age who have long-term health problems, such as:
  - Heart disease
  - Lung disease
  - Kidney disease
  - Diabetes
  - Asthma
  - Anemia
  - Weakened immune systems due to HIV/AIDS and cancer treatments
  - Breathing problems due to neuromuscular disorders
- Pregnant women

People who could spread the disease to those at high risk – such as health-care workers, out-of-home caregivers and household contacts – also should be vaccinated.

Typical flu symptoms include fever, dry cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, headache, muscle aches and extreme fatigue.

For information about vaccine availability, people should contact their doctor, local public health unit or pharmacist. For information about influenza, visit [www.ndflu.com](http://www.ndflu.com).

**REMEMBER: You can not get the flu from the flu shot.**

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